

MIXED-UP CLASSICS

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In his article “No Gnus Is Good Gnus” in the February 2002 Word Ways, Jim Puder showed what might have happened to some famous palindromes if their authors had been “suffering from the gnus”, for example, *A man, a pung, a gnu—Panama*.

Taking this appalling concept a step further, what if the master palindrome constructors had muddled their words, or worse resorted to indiscriminate use of proper names or cheater palindromes? It’s painful to even think about the sort of aberrations that could have resulted. To give you an idea, here is a collection of near-classics from the pen of Welsh palindromist Neddy Lyddon, whose work isn’t seen much nowadays. A pity, because he came so close to palindromic greatness!

Lana, Cam, an ape—Panama Canal!
I was able ere I saw Wasiere el-Basawi
Report so pacific a post, Roper.
Otis, sit on a potato pan o’ Tissito!
Suns are not set at a test on Erasmus

Evil I dwelt, Uboko, but lewd I live
Was it a cud Ducati saw?
Top step’s a pupa’s pet spot
God, note I disagree. Bast never prevents a beer gas. I diet on dog
Sex at midday? Add I.M. taxes

A cat! A panic in a pataca!
Do not deliver evilness, Essen, live reviled to nod
An old order bred Rodlona
Yawn it a Latin way
Mademoiselle, I’m Mielle Siom-Edam

Retractable Melba T. Carter
Draw no toof a foot onward
De Wercs and Edna screwed
Grampus motto: Bottoms up, Marg!
No oranges, no monsegnaroon

Anne, I vote lines reverse Nile to Vienna
Won’t lepers repel now?
Ten anierans I snare in a net
L.A. dirt, upside-rot stored, is putrid, Al

Harvard ran a Nardrav (rah!)
R.E. Lee for a taro-feeler
Rethgual’s nam, sir, is manslaughter